

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /057 W

----- 001596

R 070658Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3217

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 0250

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 0224

1. AS DEPT. WILL HAVE NOTED FROM REFTEL, PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT JAN. 5 DID NOT INCLUDE REFERENCE TO POSTPONE-
MENT OF ELECTIONS (NOR, FOR THAT MATTER TO NUMBER OF OTHER
POSSIBLE MATTERS WHICH MAY ARISE). TWO CPI MPS ASKED LAW
MINISTER GOKHALE ABOUT THIS AT PARLIAMENT JAN. 6 AND WERE TOLD
ONLY THAT GOI HAD NOT YET TAKEN A DECISION ON THE QUESTION
OF POSTPONING ELECTIONS, DESPITE THE RESOLUTION TO THIS
EFFECT AT THE CONGRESS PARTY'S CHANDIGARH SESSION LAST WEEK.
THIS WHOLE SUBJECT WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE PRESENT SESSION
OF PARLIAMENT.

2. ONE OPPOSITION MP SPECLATED TO AN EMBOFF AFTERWARDS THAT
HE THOUGHT IT QUITE CONCEIVABLE THAT THE PM WOULD STILL
DECIDE TO HOLD ELECTIONS THIS SPRING SINCE SHE DELIGHTED
IN SURPRISES.

3. THE ELECTIONS TO THE UPPER HOUSE (RAJYA SABHA) WILL IN
ANY EVENT BE HELD THIS YEAR. THESE ARE INDIRECT ELECTIONS
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THROUGH STATE LEGISLATURES AND THE CONSTITUTION AS CURENTLY

FORMULATED DOES NOT PROVIDE ANY MEANS FOR POSTPONING ELECTIONS TO THIS CONTINUING BODY. THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE RAJYA SABHA TOLD SECRETARY OF THE SENATE VALEO JAN. 6 THAT SINCE CONGRESS CONTROLLED MOST OF THE STATE LEGISLATURES, ELECTIONS THIS YEAR TO THE RAJYA SABHA COULD IN ANY EVENT ONLY RESULT IN AN INCREASE IN CONGRESS SEATS IN THE CHAMBER.

4. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT OMISSION OF REFERENCE TO POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS BY PRESIDENT AND COMMENT BY LAW MINISTER REFLECT ONLY CONSTITUTIONAL NICETY, THAT THIS IS MATTER WHICH IS STRICTLY UP TO PARLIAMENT ITSELF TO DECIDE AND NOT FOR THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN ADDRESSING, OR FOR THE LAW MINISTER TO COMMENT ON. WE WOULD ASSUME THAT CALL FOR ELECTION POSTPONEMENT, ASSUMING IT IS MADE (AS WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IT WILL BE), WILL COME FROM EITHER PRIME MINISTER, HOME MINISTER, OR MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE PRESENT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WILL END BY JAN. 31; THERE WILL THEN BE RECESS OF TWO-THREE WEEKS, AFTER WHICH BUDGET SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WILL RESUME. TIMING OF CALL FOR POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS THEORETICALLY COULD BE DELAYED EVEN UNTIL EARLY IN FEBRUARY BUDGET SESSION, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD EXPECT IT TO BE DEALT WITH THIS MONTH.

SAXB

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